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For Immediate Release

### Problems for Hinkley Project Continue to Mount Up

As problems continue to pile up for the Hinkley Point C project, the Stop Hinkley Campaign has renewed its call to EDF Energy to cut its losses and let Somerset get on with planning a sustainable renewable energy future.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported last Thursday that French reactor builder, Areva, has been aware since 2006 about problems in the steel reactor pressure vessel (RPV) of its Flamanville reactor being built in Normandy. Despite this being a critical safety issue, Areva did not see fit to alert anyone to the problem and continued construction as if nothing were amiss. (1)

In April it was revealed that anomalies had been found in the bottom and lid of the RPV of the Flamanville reactor - the same reactor type as the two proposed reactors at Hinkley. This means there are weaknesses in the vital metal structure protecting the outside world from the highly radioactive reactor core. (2) Pierre-Franck Chevet, head of France's nuclear safety inspectorate said the same manufacturing technique was used in the steel for the identical safety casings destined for Hinkley Point, which "have already been manufactured". (3)

The 110-ton spherical steel lid which was destined to sit on top of the Hinkley Point RPV is now going to be sacrificed to test the strength of parts already welded in place at Flamanville and similar projects in China. (4) If further tests prove they aren't strong enough, the equipment can't be used, said Pierre-Franck Chevet. (5)

In June another problem was revealed by a leaked report from France's nuclear safety watchdog which highlighted faults in Flamanville's cooling system. According to the *Daily Telegraph* "multiple" malfunctioning valves found in the Flamanville EPR would expose the reactor to the risk of a meltdown. (6)

Meanwhile, Austria has filed its legal challenge to the UK's €108 billion support package for Hinkley Point C. A second such challenge at the European Court is due from green energy suppliers in Germany and Austria who fear unfair competition from subsidised nuclear power in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary if the Hinkley C precedent stands. (7)

Based on previous similar cases, the legal objection made by Austria against the European Commission's decision on Hinkley could delay the progress of the facility for around three to four years according to a legal expert who has been advising the Austrian government on the matter. (8) The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is reported to be discussing with EDF how

to handle liability for costs incurred on the project should Austria's challenge be successful and the deal has to be cancelled. (9)

*“There now appears to be deep concern in Government, especially the Treasury, (10) about Hinkley C. It is difficult to believe they would still want to go-ahead with Hinkley C after such indications of incompetence and secrecy on the part of Areva. Yet DECC is busy removing subsidies from our successful renewables industry to save pennies whilst planning to finance what will probably be the most expensive man-made object ever built in the world,”* said Stop Hinkley spokesperson, Roy Pumfrey. *“It’s time to call a halt now before anything else goes wrong. Let’s get on with implementing an energy strategy which doesn’t generate dangerous waste and put us all at risk.”*

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### **Notes**

- (1) Telegraph 9th July 2015  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/energy/nuclearpower/11727000/Areva-aware-as-early-as-2006-of-serious-fault-in-nuclear-reactor-destined-for-UK.html>  
See also BBC 9th July 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-33469774>
- (2) Reuters 17th April 2015 <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/04/17/areva-nuclear-idUKL5N0XE11320150417> and Ecologist 14th April 2015  
[http://www.theecologist.org/News/news\\_round\\_up/2829257/nuclear\\_reactor\\_flaws\\_raise\\_hinkley\\_c\\_safety\\_fears.html](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_round_up/2829257/nuclear_reactor_flaws_raise_hinkley_c_safety_fears.html)
- (3) Independent 18th April 2015 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-nuclear-strategy-faces-meltdown-as-faults-are-found-in-identical-french-project-10186163.html>
- (4) Energy Voice 19th June 2015 <https://www.energyvoice.com/otherenergy/80459/nuclear-test-risks-blowing-the-lid-off-uks-plan-to-keep-lights-on/>
- (5) Penn Energy 19th June 2015 <http://www.pennenergy.com/articles/pei/2015/06/fear-of-more-delays-as-hinkley-nuclear-reactor-component-faces-test.html>
- (6) Telegraph 9th June 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11662889/Faulty-valves-in-new-generation-EPR-nuclear-reactor-pose-meltdown-risk-inspectors-warn.html>
- (7) Ecologist 6th July 2015  
[http://www.theecologist.org/campaigning/2936931/austria\\_files\\_hinkley\\_point\\_c\\_legal\\_challenge\\_in\\_european\\_court.html](http://www.theecologist.org/campaigning/2936931/austria_files_hinkley_point_c_legal_challenge_in_european_court.html)
- (8) Power Engineering International 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015  
<http://www.powerengineeringint.com/articles/2015/07/austrian-legal-action-could-delay-hinkley-point-nuclear-for-three-to-four-years.html>
- (9) Telegraph 30th June 2015  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/11709083/Government-and-EDF-in-talks-over-liabilities-if-Austria-wins-nuclear-state-aid-appeal.html>
- (10) FT 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b8741dd0-1048-11e5-bd70-00144feabdc0.html>